

Introduction:

Lis Eastham (Ferguson 1969-76) garnered many hundreds of images from The Keep (East Sussex Records Office) when updating our SMHA website. She and Penny Harrison (Titheradge (1969-73) have gradually worked through all these, formatting them so that readers can understand and enjoy our wonderful history.

This relates to missionaries who went from SMH to China and whose stories are told in our magazines and Newsletters. The introduction we believe to be from a predecessor on the SMHA Committee, (in all probability Penelope Gardiner (Buck, 1961-65), without whom much of our history would have been lost.

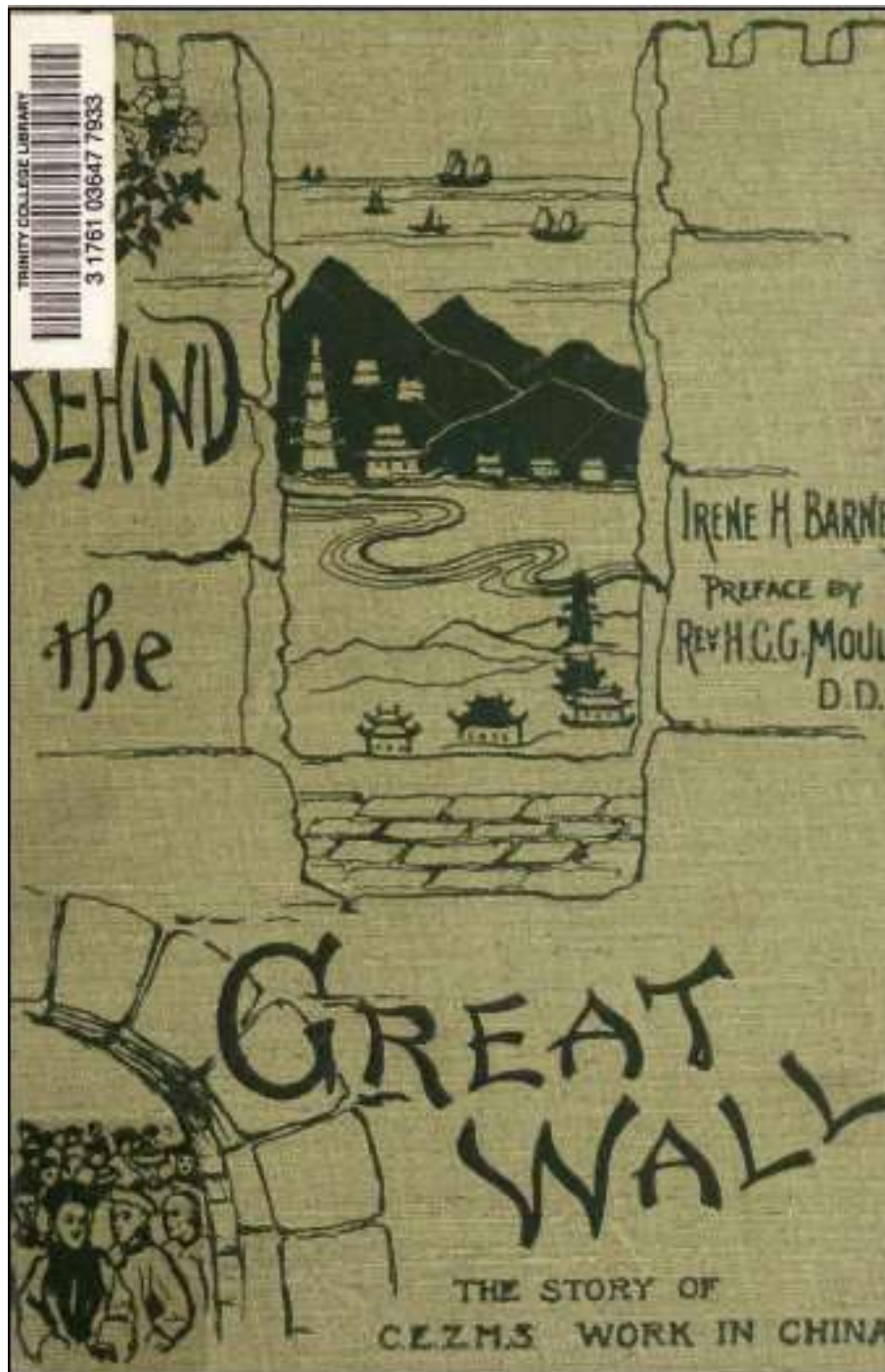
A REMARKABLE LADY

Edith Churcher came from Suffolk to St Mary's Hall, to teach English in 1884. Having taught for 13 years she felt the call to go to China to assist missionary work. She went to Yang-Cheo and taught in the China Inland Mission School. Each year she sent back articles about her life in China to be printed in the Old Girls' magazine. In 1900 she was at Chefoo teaching the children of missionaries and they included boys to which she was not used! In 1901 she experienced the fear of a Boxer uprising in which "all foreigners were to be killed" but luckily the Mission compound was not attacked. The Consul was to raise 3 red flags if the inmates were in danger and had to flee downstream by boat. Whilst at Ying-Shan, Western China, she reported that all the Christian women had unbound their feet and the Christian men had ordered their children's feet to be unbound.

She was sent to various Chinese towns to help the Mission work and at Kuang-yuan Sze-chuan she started a "Total Abstinence Society" to try and wean people off smoking opium.

In 1907 she returned to St Mary's Hall on Furlough and attended the Founders' Day Service. By 1909 she was suffering severe attacks of rheumatism which grew worse. Eventually she returned to England and sadly in 1929 was knocked down by a car in Hastings, probably because her hearing and eyesight were poor and she was not used to "motorised vehicles". So a lady who had survived the privations of life in rural China from 1897-1927 succumbed to modern technology!

Whilst writing this account an amazing coincidence happened. I was cleaning my loft and came across a book describing the life of 3 other lady missionaries in China in 1923-1926!! They were there at the same time as Edith but in different areas. The cover and an extract follow.





CHAPTER VI

THE CRY OF THE CHINESE CHILDREN

*"Only a little Chinese girl
Drowned in the floating tide!"*

JESUS said, "FEED MY LAMBS."—ST. JOHN XXI. 15.

NEAR a pool in Foo-chow a stone is inscribed,—
"GIRLS MAY NOT BE DROWNED HERE."

Yet although infanticide is prohibited by Chinese law, it is not considered a crime by Chinese morality. "There is no country in the world," says Dr. Robert K. Douglas, Professor of Chinese at King's College, London, "where practice and profession are more widely separated than in China." And it would seem true, since we know that in some provinces of the empire *thirty out of every hundred infant girls are put to death.*

Recently a traveller extended his inquiries to forty different towns and villages, and found that the percentage was between seventy and eighty down to ten, giving an average of about forty per cent. of all girls born in these places as being murdered. The examina-